

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAM-01 NIC-01 OMB-01 CU-04 DRC-01 /104 W

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P R 041535Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2645

INFO AMCONSUL KADUNA

AMCONSUL IBADAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, NI

SUBJECT: CONTINUED STUDENT AGITATION FOR RELEASE

IBADAN DETAINEES

REF: IBADAN 0053

1. STUDENT UNREST AND AGITATION FOR RELEASE OF THOSE ARRESTED DURING ATTEMPTED DEMONSTRATION IN IBADAN (IBADAN 0051) FEBRUARY 1 CONTINUES IN AT LEAST THREE UNIVERSITIES. TO AVOID POSSIBLE CONFRONTATION OVER ANNOUNCED STUDENT BOYCOTT, VICE CHANCELLOR THOMAS HAS CLOSED UNIBADAN, AND ALL STUDENTS ARE REQUIRED TO LEAVE CAMPUS BY TOMORROW. STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY OF LAGOS IN SYMPATHY WITH DETAINEES HAVE KIDNAPPED AT LEAST FIVE POLICEMEN, DECLARING THAT THEY WILL NOT BE RELEASED UNTIL DETAINEES ARE FREED. POLICE HAVE CORDONED OFF CAMPUS, BUT HAVE MADE NO ATTEMPT BREAK THROUGH STUDENT BARRICADES. POLICE HAVE ALSO REPORTED THAT STUDENTS AT ABU HAVE BURNED CAMPUS POLICE STATION.

2. IN LAGOS PRESS CONFERENCE THIS MORNING, DEPUTY INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF POLICE T.A. FAGBOLA PRESENTED POLICE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SIDE OF DISPUTE. MAIN THRUST OF ARGUEMENTS IN HIS PREPARED

STATEMENT INCLUDED: A) OUTBREAK OF VIOLENCE IN IBADAN DEMONSTRATION WAS AT LEAST PARTIALLY INTENTIONAL AND ENTIRELY FAULT OF STUDENTS; B) POLICE USED MINIMUM FORCE TO DISPERSE DEMONSTRATORS AND "AT NO TIME WERE FIREARMS USED;" C) POSITION OF STUDENT DETAINEES WILL BE LOOKED INTO ONLY AFTER POLICE HOSTAGES ARE RELEASED AND CAMPUSES RETURN TO NORMAL. HE IMPLIED, HOWEVER, THAT AT LEAST FOR TIME BEING POLICE WOULD NOT USE FORCE TO ENTER LAGOS CAMPUS UNLESS HOSTAGES WERE HARMED OR THERE WAS FURTHER DESTRUCTION OF GOVERNMENT PROPERTY. IN ANSWER TO REPORTER'S QUESTION, HE ALSO IMPLIED THAT POLICE BELIEVED VIOLENCE OF DEMONSTRATION INCITED BY UNNAMED FOREIGN "ELEMENTS" THAT HAD NOT BEEN PRESENT DURING LAST YEARS'S PEACEFUL OBSERVANCE OF ANNIVERSARY OF DEATH OF STUDENT KILLED IN DEMONSTRATION IN IBADAN IN 1971.

3. COMMENT: AS OF THIS MORNING SITUATION AT LAGOS CAMPUS WAS STILL REASONABLY RELAXED. POLICE WERE MAKING NO ATTEMPT TO INTERFERE WITH STUDENT BARRICADE, AND STUDENTS WERE ALLOWING FREE ENTRANCE AND EXIT FROM UNIVERSITY MAIN GATE BY PEDESTRIANS (OTHER THAN POLICE), THOUGH NOT BY AUTOMOBILES.

4. SITUATION IS FURTHER COMPLICATED BY ABSENCE FROM LAGOS OF GENERAL GOWON ON OFFICIAL VISIT TO NORTH-EASTERN STATE. IN ANY CASE, GIVEN FMG DISLIKE OF EVEN APPEARANCE OF BOWING TO OUTSIDE PRESSURE, IT UNLIKELY THAT DETAINEES WILL BE RELEASED AS LONG AS CAMPUS HOSTAGES ARE HELD BY STUDENTS. DESPITE PRESENT OFFICIAL RESTRAINT, POLICE -- AND PRESUMABLY GOVERNMENT -- PATIENCE MAY BE RUNNING THIS AND EXISTING STALEMATE UNLIKELY TO LAST LONG -- WITH STUDENTS PROBABLY ENDING UP WITH SHORT END OF STICK.
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